

Lehi Loves to Celebrate—"It all Begins"

By Donna Anderson

Lehi has been a community of citizens who enjoy celebrating. Even from it's earliest settlement, some kind of activity has been centered around a special day or event in history.

This year, 1987, the Roundup celebration will commemorate fifty years of professional rodeo. Although Lehi has had many more than fifty celebrations and the rodeos have not been in consecutive order, this will prove to be a highlight in the colorful traditions that were started and have continued.

Looking back over the years since Lehi saw it's first Fourth of July fireworks display, it's first rodeo and parade, this rich heritage has been lived and relived. From the middle 1950's, most of the city-wide celebration centered around the Fourth of July or Pioneer Day, July 24th.

For the Fourth, a parade was the main attraction. Members of the community pulled out every available farm wagon, swept off the hay and manure, hitched up the team and curried the horses, then draped ten-cents-yard red, white and blue bunting on the wagons and used them as floats. They tried to have each float follow a theme, either depicting some state historical event, something patriotic or even comic.

One early parade was especially impressive because 13 young women wearing red, white and blue sashes on their white gowns were mounted on horseback. They also wore gold-lettered banners spelling out the names of the 13 original colonies of the United States. These girls rode side-saddle because women never rode astride a horse at that time. They were escorted by young men and it will be noted that most of the girls were riding a horse for the first time and needed the escort for safety during the parade.

In Pioneer Day parades, young women were also seen on floats representing the countries from which immigrants had come to have religious freedom in America and to Utah. To start a typical holiday celebration, citizens were jolted from their beds by the sound of gunfire or a cannon's roar, the traditional welcome to Independence Day. Then a musical group moved through the town serenading those who were awake.

Through the years, those concerts were provided by a fife and drum corps, the Lehi Brass Band, the Lehi Silver Band, Kirkham Brothers Orchestra, the Smuin Orchestra and Carter's Orchestra.

A parade was held at 10 A.M. with everyone following to the park, where a two-hour program was presented in the grandstand. There would always be an invited guest speaker or "orator" the reading of the Declaration of Independence and other poems and stories.

An example of these programs is quoted from "The Lehi Sun" July 17, 1933: "*The Pioneer Day Celebration was carried out in fitting style to suit the occasion. The old-time string orchestra bestowed special honor to the living pioneers by playing several of their lovely old tunes at the home of each pioneer. Those playing in the orchestra were James Smith, Charles Turner, Joseph Barnes and Sam Webb.*"

Later on in the program, "thirty-seven pioneers of Lehi were given seats of honor on the stand and presented with ribbon badges with the inscription: "A Pioneer," as a small token of remembrance. After the program, there were children's races and games and a children's dance. The Lehi baseball team also displayed their talents in a competitive game with one of the surrounding community teams. Sometimes horse races were included in the afternoon activities.

In the evening, adults really had an opportunity to "kick up their heels" until midnight. When possible they could be afforded, a beautiful fireworks display (costing around \$100) fittingly ended the day's activities. When these early Lehians

celebrated, they had one long exciting day. Now we take three days and this year, probably the whole week.